

Unit 3: Using Social Media in Business

Level: **3**

Unit type: **Internal**

Guided learning hours: **90**

Unit in brief

Learners explore how businesses use social media to promote their products and services. Learners also implement social media activities in a business to meet requirements.

Unit introduction

Social media websites are a popular way for people to communicate and share information with friends and family. People spend a lot of time on social media websites and they give businesses opportunities to interact with people, for example to promote their business, to encourage people to visit their e-commerce site and buy, to provide customer service. You may be familiar with social media for personal use and in this unit you will discover how it can be used in a business context.

You will explore different social media websites, the ways in which they can be used and the potential pitfalls when using them for business purposes. You will develop a plan to use social media strategies for business purposes to achieve specific aims and objectives. You will then implement the plan, developing and posting content and interacting with others. Finally, you will collect data on the business use of social media and review the effectiveness of your efforts.

Understanding how to use social media for business purposes is useful for employment in information technology and in a variety of business sectors. Also, social media skills are closely linked with web and mobile applications development. This unit gives you a starting point for progression to roles such as social media specialist, content developer and web developer.

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

- A** Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which businesses promote their products and services
- B** Develop a plan to use social media in a business to meet requirements
- C** Implement the use of social media in a business.

Summary of unit

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which businesses promote their products and services	A1 Social media websites A2 Business uses of social media A3 Risks and issues	A report that explores how a business can use social media to raise its profile and promote products and services.
B Develop a plan to use social media in a business to meet requirements	B1 Social media planning processes B2 Business requirements B3 Content planning and publishing B4 Developing an online community B5 Developing a social media policy B6 Reviewing and refining plans	<p>Documentation showing the planning, preparation and implementation of the use of social media in a business, which meets identified requirements.</p> <p>Established social media pages dedicated to the business, which fulfil the requirements given in the plan, accompanied by supporting documentation.</p>
C Implement the use of social media in a business	C1 Creating accounts and profiles C2 Content creation and publication C3 Implementation of online community building C4 Data gathering and analysis C5 Skills, knowledge and behaviours	<p>Statistical data generated by social media websites, including an analysis of how it was used to optimise the use of social media.</p> <p>A report evaluating the use of social media in a business against the plan, showing how well it meets business requirements.</p>

Content

Learning aim A: Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which businesses promote their products and services

A1 Social media websites

- Developments in social media affect the way businesses promote products and services:
 - social media websites are constantly evolving and new features are introduced regularly
 - features, structure and target audience of different social media websites, e.g. Facebook™, Twitter™, LinkedIn®, Google™ + and YouTube™.
- How businesses can use social media websites to support their business aims and needs, including:
 - creating an image or brand
 - promoting products and/or services
 - communicating with customers
 - customer service
 - resolving queries and managing issues.
- Features of social media websites tailored to business needs, including:
 - advertising
 - linking to previous e-commerce site search history and display of search-related adverts
 - website and mobile device integration
 - relationship to search engine optimization (SEO)
 - profile on the sites, describing the business to visitors
 - usage data indicating profile of followers and effectiveness of posts, e.g. Facebook Insights™, Twitter Analytics™ and Google Analytics™
 - audience profiles (age, gender, income) of social media websites.

A2 Business uses of social media

- Posting different content formats, e.g. text, images, video, links, polls and quizzes.
- Content focus and meaning, e.g. information, promotion, humour, special offers and customer service.
- Developing an audience and encouraging people to follow or 'like' the business through the creation and use of engaging content.
- Keywords and their use in posted content.
- Developing contacts by following and linking relevant businesses and individuals, and sharing content posted by others.
- Direct and indirect advertising.
- Links to other commercial information, e.g. company website, e-commerce websites.
- Relationship between social media website and company website, e.g. using:
 - social media buttons on the company website
 - company website links within social media posts that encourage visits to e-commerce site to make purchases
 - social media news feeds on the company website.

A3 Risks and issues

- Negative comments on social media sites and damage to reputation.
- Time constraints on social media interaction, return on time investment.
- Unforeseen consequences of posted content.
- Security issues related to increased company profile as a result of use of social media:
 - dangers of virus infection
 - potential for blackmail/ransom
 - theft of company-sensitive information or personal information.

Learning aim B: Develop a plan to use social media in a business to meet requirements

B1 Social media planning processes

Processes to consider when planning the potential use of social media in a business, including:

- the specific business requirements
- content planning and publishing
- developing online communities
- enforcing social media policies.

B2 Business requirements

- Working with a client to set requirements for the use of social media and the potential benefits for the business when compared to traditional promotion methods.
- Establishing timescales and responsibilities for the use of social media within a business.
- Identifying criteria for measuring success of the use of social media within a business.
- Selection of social media websites to use by matching site profiles to requirements in terms of a business use of social media.
- Identifying targets for the use of social media, number of followers, 'likes' and shares.

B3 Content planning and publishing

Planning posts and other content to be published on social media websites, including:

- identifying a target audience (e.g. age, gender, interests, income)
- linking type of content to target audience to ensure it is engaging
- researching keywords (e.g. Google Adwords™) and creating keyword strategies to help users identify content
- researching the best time to publish content and creating a publishing schedule (type of content, frequency, day and time).

B4 Developing an online community

Working with a client to develop a strategy to encourage online community building, including:

- use of promotional techniques, e.g. requesting feedback, surveys, special offers and creating links between social media websites and company e-commerce site
- monitoring social media website streams and responding to queries, requests and complaints.

B5 Developing a social media policy

Working with a client to create a social media policy applicable to businesses, including:

- company philosophy (identifying and reflecting this in posted content)
- promotion of honesty and respect in posted content
- ways to ensure confidentiality of information
- methods of dealing with security issues
- separation of company and personal content
- legal and ethical considerations.

B6 Reviewing and refining plans

Working with a client and other relevant stakeholders to improve the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of the plans, including:

- gathering feedback from a client and potential users
- communicating with a client, e.g. email, verbal communication
- scheduling and documenting meetings
- agreeing and adjusting timescales
- refining ideas and solutions.

Learning aim C: Implement the use of social media in a business

Selection and use of appropriate social media website tools and techniques to implement a plan.

C1 Creating accounts and profiles

- Sign-up, creation and administration of social media website business accounts.
- Creation and set-up of a company profile.
- Customisation and configuration of the company profile, including privacy settings, colour schemes, images, text and other assets that follow branding guidelines.

C2 Content creation and publication

- Carry out research in order to produce engaging content for the intended target audience.
- Produce, publish and manage content.
- Improve visibility of published content.
- Methods to encourage audience interaction, e.g. use of images, phrasing of text content, timing of posts to coincide with times when followers are online.
- Integration of information across company e-commerce website and social media websites.
- Adapting and testing content on different device platforms, e.g. mobile phones, tablets and notebooks.

C3 Implementation of online community building

- Implementation of an online community building strategy, including:
 - use of hashtags, sharing and tagging
 - finding and joining groups and contributing information
 - following people and businesses.
- Monitoring and responding to comments; importance of prompt responses.
- Using tools and techniques to automate content posting.

C4 Data gathering and analysis

Gathering and interpreting data on social media websites using dedicated tools, e.g. Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, Google Analytics and TweetReach™.

- Identifying interaction relating to individual posts.
- Identifying audience profiles, e.g. age, location.
- Monitoring number of 'likes' and 'shares'.
- Comparison of intended target audience versus actual audience.
- Identification of posts and types of content which create the highest levels of interaction.
- Identifying the number of visitors who 'click through' to company e-commerce website.

C5 Skills, knowledge and behaviours

- Planning and recording, including the setting of relevant targets with timescales, how and when feedback from others, such as customers and social media followers, will be gathered.
- Reviewing and responding to outcomes, including the use of feedback from others, e.g. customers and social media followers who can provide feedback on the quality and suitability of the features against the business requirements.
- Demonstrating own behaviours and their impact on outcomes, to include professionalism, etiquette, supportive of others, timely and appropriate leadership, accountability and individual responsibility.
- Evaluating outcomes to help inform high-quality justified recommendations and decisions.
- Evaluating targets to obtain insights into own performance.

- Media and communication skills, including:
 - the ability to convey intended meaning, e.g. written (email, design documentation, recording documentation, reports, visual aids for presentation use); verbal communication requirements (one to one and group, informal and formal situations)
 - use of tone and language for verbal and written communications to convey intended meaning and make a positive and constructive impact on audience, e.g. positive and engaging tone, technical/vocational language suitable for intended audience, avoidance of jargon
 - responding constructively to the contributions of others, e.g. supportive, managing contributions so all have the opportunity to contribute, responding to objections, managing expectations, resolving conflict.

Assessment criteria

Pass	Merit	Distinction
Learning aim A: Explore the impact of social media on the ways in which businesses promote their products and services		A.D1 Evaluate the business use of social media to interact with customers and promote products or services to a target audience.
A.P1 Explain the different ways in which a business can use social media.	A.M1 Assess the different ways in which a business can use social media to attract a target audience.	
A.P2 Explain the audience profiles of different social media websites.		
Learning aim B: Develop a plan to use social media in a business to meet requirements		BC.D2 Evaluate the plan and use of social media in a business against business requirements. BC.D3 Demonstrate individual responsibility, creativity, and effective self-management in the planning and use of social media in a business context.
B.P3 Produce a plan to use social media in a business to meet its business requirements.	B.M2 Justify planning decisions made, showing how the plan will fulfil its purpose and business requirements.	
B.P4 Review the plan with others in order to identify and inform improvements.		
Learning aim C: Implement the use of social media in a business		
C.P5 Produce business-related content using appropriate features of social media which meet the requirements of the plan.	C.M3 Optimise the content, format and features of social media which meet the requirements of the plan.	
C.P6 Review data obtained on social media usage and interaction.		

Essential information for assignments

The recommended structure of assessment is shown in the unit summary along with suitable forms of evidence. *Section 6* gives information on setting assignments and there is further information on our website.

There is a maximum number of two summative assignments for this unit. The relationship of the learning aims and criteria is:

Learning aim: A (A.P1, A.P2, A.M1, A.D1)

Learning aims: B and C (B.P3, B.P4, C.P5, C.P6, B.M2, C.M3, BC.D2, BC.D3)

Further information for teachers and assessors

Resource requirements

For this unit, learners must have access to a variety of social media websites that will allow them to plan and implement the use of the social media features.

Essential information for assessment decisions

Learning aim A

For distinction standard, learners will produce a comprehensive, well-balanced evaluation of how a business uses social media, making realistic and well-explained business-related observations on the benefits and disadvantages, while considering their target customers or audience. Learners will provide real-life, relevant examples of how businesses have used social media effectively and how some businesses have not managed the risks involved effectively. Learners must articulate their arguments fluently and their views concisely, providing an evaluation that makes reasoned, valid judgements.

The evidence will demonstrate high-quality written/oral communication through the use of accurate and fluent technical vocabulary, to support a well-structured and considered response that clearly connects chains of reasoning.

For merit standard, learners will present a reasoned and well-explained assessment of a range of different ways that a business can use social media to interact with the target audience for their products and/or services. The discussion will be balanced and supported by clear examples. Learners will focus their comments on the business uses of the sites and not personal uses. The evidence must be technically accurate and demonstrate good-quality written or oral communication.

For pass standard, learners will provide detailed information, supported by real-life examples, covering all the ways that businesses can use social media (as listed in the unit content). They will research the different audience profiles for the main social media sites, explain how the different sites appeal to their different audiences and relate it to how different business can use social media. The evidence may have some inaccuracies and include a limited range of examples.

Learning aims B and C

For distinction standard, learners will draw on and show synthesis of knowledge across the learning aims in order to evaluate both the plan to use social media and its implementation. Learners must provide a reasoned and realistic review of the outcomes, identifying both the positive and negative aspects. For example, they can explain why some things they planned to do did not happen or did not work out as they had expected. Learners also need to show that they have considered the legal and ethical implications of the material that they posted on social media sites. Learners will make reasoned, appropriate suggestions as to how the use of social media could be improved in the future. They will undertake a detailed examination of the data collected on the interaction achieved and the profile of the people who have interacted with their social media posts. This information will link clearly to a discussion of how well the data matches their intentions. For example, learners may discover that the age and location profile of the people interacting with their posts does not match the target audience of the business concerned. In this case, they would need to discuss possible reasons for the mismatch and how this issue could be resolved.

Learners will take individual responsibility for their own work, for example identifying potential issues and resolving these, reviewing their work and making improvements, keeping their work safe and secure and showing responsible use of quoted materials. Creativity will be shown, for example, through evidence of taking innovative approaches to problem solving and the originality of their solution. The evaluation of behaviours will consider learners' use of 'soft skills' in relation to the vocational context of the project, such as liaising with clients and time management. Learners will evaluate their own behaviours throughout the project and the impact they had on the outcomes. Learners will refer to tangible evidence to support their evaluation, such as meeting notes, correspondence and time plans.

For merit standard, learners will provide a clear, accurate and well-reasoned justification of the choices they made in the planning of the use of social media. Learners will show a clear link to the required business objectives. Learners also need to show that they have considered the legal and ethical implications of the material that they posted on social media sites. The usage data collected by learners will also assess how effective each of their posts has been at achieving their stated aim and how effective it has been in encouraging interaction with the audience. Learners will apply their knowledge through selection and application of appropriate tools and techniques to optimise the effectiveness of their future posts and other social media features. They will make accurate and reasoned suggestions as to how the outcomes could be improved if the task were to be repeated.

For pass standard, learners will produce a plan that meets the business requirements and identifies the target audience. The plan will also identify timescales and keywords, and include a content-posting schedule. Learners will show an awareness of legal and ethical implications of the content they plan to post.

Learners will review their plan, and ask others such as the client/employer and customers/audience to assist them in this process and provide evidence of their review.

Learners will select a variety of social media websites and implement their plan and interact with their followers. Some simulation may be required in order to provide the interaction and fellow learners can play the role of 'customers' for each other. Learners can provide evidence in the form of annotated screenshots showing how they have implemented the plan they have created.

Learners must collect and review a range of data using features such as Facebook Insights, Google Analytics and Twitter Analytics, showing the interaction that individual posts have created and the profile of their audience. This data will be used to optimise their future posts, for example by adjusting the wording, content and timing of posts, as well as demonstrating use of any other new features.

Links to other units

This unit links to:

- Unit 1: Information Technology Systems
- Unit 2: Creating Systems to Manage Information
- Unit 6: Website Development.

Employer involvement

This unit would benefit from employer involvement in the form of:

- guest speakers
- technical workshops involving staff from local organisations/businesses
- contribution of design/ideas to unit assignment/scenario/case study/project materials, including own organisation/business materials as exemplars where appropriate
- feedback from staff from local organisations/businesses on plans/designs/items developed
- opportunities for observation of organisational/business application during work experience
- support from local organisation/business staff as mentors.